

March 18, 2003

Environmental Protection Agency-EPA Docket Center  
Office of Air and Radiation  
Mail Code 6102-T  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Reference No. OAR-2003-0008

Dear EPA Committee Members:

First of all, I want to thank for giving me this opportunity to discuss this very important topic. My name is Ann Tillery and I am from Beaumont, TX. My community deals with major pollution from area plants and refineries.

I am writing today because of a promise I made to my grandson, Justin O'Neill, who died a little over a year ago from a very rare form of brain cancer called gliomatosis cerebri. Justin grew up in Fannett not far from the Chem Waste incinerator on Hwy. 73 and the Goodyear plant on Interstate 10. He is not the only child from that area to be stricken with cancer of the nervous system. There are many others.

After he was diagnosed, I retired from my job to help his mother take care of him. Over the three years he was ill, I watched the healthy little boy I loved so much wither away as the disease, as well as chemotherapy and radiation treatments, took their toll on his body. He asked me many times why he became ill and if he was going to die. Despite the efforts of his family and many talented doctors, he died one week before his 16th birthday.

I promised him that I would find out why he got sick and try my best to prevent other children from having to suffer as he did. While little is known about this type of cancer because it is so rare, doctors told us that only 4% of this type cancer is hereditary and — 96 % chance of these cases are environmentally induced.

My grandson is not the only child in this area who has died of this supposed "rare" form of brain cancer. Another teenage boy from Kountze was stricken with this deadly disease about the same time as my grandson. He died just three months after his diagnosis.

Both boys' fathers worked as electricians in local refineries.

Another young adult — a man in his 20s from Orange — died of this disease as well. He was in the military and worked refueling jet airplanes. His doctors at the military hospital admitted that his disease was caused by working with petrochemicals.

These are not coincidences and something must be done. From Oct. 1, 2000 to Sept. 30, 2001, 1,382 children from the Golden Triangle were treated for cancer at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, according to their records.

Cancer clusters in Jefferson County have been investigated by the Texas Department of Health. The list of cancers affecting this area is identical to those investigated in Baytown, Texas City and Corpus Christi, according to TDH records on their website.

What do these places have in common? Chemical plants and oil refineries.

Regulatory agencies and representatives from industry will ask what proof we have that the chemicals they use caused these illnesses. The fact is that more than 80 percent of the

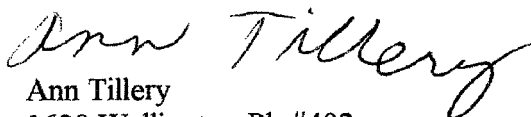
chemicals used by industry have not been tested. We do not know their long-term effects. So I ask them, what proof do they have that these chemicals are safe? They have none. What will do to help us? How many more of our children will be sacrificed in the name of the all mighty dollar? Industry and jobs are important, but not more important than our children. They are our future, and they deserve a future of their own.

I am not talking about shutting these plants down. I am asking them to be responsible neighbors. They need to install the latest pollution technology. They need to do a better job protecting us from accidental upsets and chemical releases. They need to help fund studies on the safety of the chemicals they use and expose their neighbors to. And most of all, they have a responsibility all people to have clean air in their communities.

Many people could not write to you today. They are at taking care of a sick child and have no free time. I am also talking about the children whose lives have been cut short by deadly diseases. I beg you to not let their deaths be in vain. Please do not let my grandson's death be in vain.

Thank you for your time. I plead with you to do to test these chemicals for a child's consumption and make these refineries be good neighbors. They claim it is too expensive. It is expensive for parents to have a child go through cancer treatments also. and our bottom lines can't compare to the refineries'.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Tillery". The signature is fluid and connected, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ann Tillery  
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